



CURA AQUARUM IN SICILIA

edited by
Gemma C.M. Jansen

Sicily, with its abundant presence of historical waterworks, served as background for the 10th international conference on the history of water management and hydraulic engineering in the Mediterranean region in May 1998.

The conference addressed five themes as a basis for discussion and as a stimulus for new debate and for finding new directions of research. The first topic dealt with the conditions imposed by nature, their influence upon human behaviour and, consequently, the development of water management. The tangible results of human responses to these parameters set by nature were the subject of the second and third theme respectively, that is to say on the building of aqueducts and the water management of Roman baths. Themes four and five went beyond a mere examination of the archaeological realia: they dealt with the questions whether there was a water shortage or a water surplus in Roman cities and whether the Romans had a hygienic lifestyle. These issues were tabled in order to improve our understanding of the context of ancient water management.

These proceedings contain the papers given at the conference, many of them presenting cases from Sicily. There are contributions by archaeologists, historians, geologists, hydraulic engineers and urban historians, all specialists in the field of historical water research. The volume is richly illustrated.

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CURA AQUARUM IN SICILIA

Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress on
the History of Water Management and Hydraulic Engineering
in the Mediterranean Region

Syracuse, May 16-22, 1998

edited by

Gemma C.M. Jansen

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Photo Cover: The aqueduct of Termini Imerese, Sicily
Nathalie de Haan

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Preface

Gemma C.M. Jansen

Ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ – Water is the best thing of all

This was written by the Greek poet Pindar during his stay at the court of Syracuse in 476 BC (First Olympian Ode).

Nearly 25 centuries after Pindar wrote the above line, a conference entitled *Cura Aquarum in Sicilia* was held at Syracuse on the history of water management (May 16-22, 1998). The conference was held under the aegis of the departments of Classical Archaeology and Ancient History of the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, in collaboration with the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Siracusa. Its organisation was in the hands of Nathalie de Haan, Gerda de Kleijn and the editor of these proceedings.

The strength of this particular conference was its combination of a problem-oriented approach with lectures and workshops in the field: discussions were not only held in the conference hall but also at several excavation sites with remains of historical waterworks. The contribution of participants from a wide range of different backgrounds (archaeologists, historians, civil engineers, hydraulic engineers, town planners and geologists) ensured a fruitful exchange of the latest findings and insights from the different disciplines.

This symposium was the tenth in a series of international symposia on the history of water management and hydraulic engineering in the Mediterranean region. They have been organised every two or three years since 1975, and their aim is to stimulate interdisciplinary debate about water supply in Antiquity. The next conference will be held in Israel in 2001, and it will be followed by a conference in Ephesos in 2004.

Many people have supported the organisers of this conference. It has been an honour to collaborate with dott. G. Voza (head of the Soprintendenza di Beni Culturali ed Ambientali di Siracusa e Ragusa) and dott.ssa A. Curcio (Museo Archeologico regionale Paolo Orsi). We want to acknowledge the indispensable advice and help we received from professor dr. J.A.K.E. de Waele (University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands), professor D.P. Crouch (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Troy, New York), professor O. Belvedere (Università di Palermo) and Professor Dr.-Ing. H. Fahlbusch (Fachhochschule Lübeck). We also want to thank professor M.R. Mazzola (head of Azienda Municipalizzata Acquedotto di Palermo) and his team, among whom dott.ssa M.C. Russo and dott. Biancono, dott. R. Ruggieri (director of the Centro Ibleo di Ricerche Speleo-Idrogeologiche, Ragusa) and dott. L. Guzzardi (Soprintendenza di Beni Culturali ed Ambientali di Enna). They helped to organize sensational visits to the *qanats* of Palermo, the Galermi aqueduct and Morgantina. Special thanks are due to the Commune di Termini Imerese for their unforgettable and most appreciated welcome.

The conference was made a success by the nearly one hundred participants who animatedly discussed many subjects until late in the night. Many of them contributed to this volume.

We are most grateful for the financial support received from the Wilhelm-Mommertz-Stiftung, Germany, and the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Finally, we would like to thank the Board of the Stichting Bulletin Antieke Beschaving for their willingness to publish the results of this conference as supplement 6 of *BABesch*.

A symposium should not only be informative but also suggest new directions and research goals. Ideally it should even function as a first impulse to new projects and collaborations. We hope that these proceedings will contribute to that aim.

Nijmegen, February 2000